

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT

Support for the amendments to Claims 1, 2 and 11 is found on page 5, lines 3-6 of the specification. No new matter would be added to this application by entry of this amendment. No new issues would be raised by entry of this amendment as the existence of projections and depressions has already been considered by the examiner

Upon entry of this amendment, Claims 1-11 will remain active in this application, with claims 1-5 and 9-11 being under active consideration.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

The present invention is directed to a bulky sheet.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Chevalier for the helpful and courteous discussion held with their U.S. representative on November 13, 2003. At that time, Applicants' U.S. representative argued that the cited reference failed to suggest projections in both the X and Y directions of a sheet. The following is intended to expand upon the discussion with the Examiner.

Disposable cleaning sheets based on entangled fibers have recently become popular for household cleaning. Dirt and debris may become entrapped within entangled fibers providing for the removal of dust, rather than simply the redistribution thereof.

The desire to improve the feel and performance of such bulky sheets has resulted in the introduction of a patterned surface thereon. During such patterning, it is sometimes the case that the pattern is formed unevenly or a desired thickness is not obtained. Accordingly, improved bulky sheets are sought.

The present invention addresses the problem by providing for a bulky sheet comprised of an entangled fiber aggregate having projections and depressions, in which the projections have a distance between them in both the width and longitudinal directions. Applicants have

discovered that such a sheet feels soft and agreeable to the touch and is capable of picking up dirt and debris from uneven surfaces. Such a bulky sheet is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited prior art of record.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Schoots (U.S. 4,704,113) is respectfully traversed.

Schoots fails to disclose or suggest a bulky sheet in which the projections have a distance between them in both the width and longitudinal directions

Schoots describes a textile-like nonwoven fabric, in which the material is compacted (preferably micro-creped) subsequent to mechanically-entangling the fibers (column 1, lines 44-49). The technique used to compact the fabric is generally described at column 2, lines 54-65. A more detailed description is found at column 3, lines 30-40, in which the fabric is caused to be rearranged in a repeating series of wave-like undulations, extending substantially throughout its length and running across the width of the fabric. As such the fabric is imparted with peak and valleys which run the width of the fabric. While there is a distance between peaks in along the length of the fabric, there is no distance between peaks along the width of the fabric.

In contrast, the present invention is directed to a bulky sheet in which the projections have a distance between them in both the width and longitudinal directions. Applicants note that the claims have been amended to recite the presence of a distance between projections in both the width and longitudinal directions. As the cited reference fails to disclose or suggest a distance between projections in both the width and longitudinal directions the claimed invention is clearly not made obvious from this reference.

Moreover, the cited reference fails to even suggest a method in which a distance between projections would be present along the width of the fabric. As previously discussed, the reference imparts a wave-like form to the fabric, by subjecting the fabric to the action of a

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drum, presser assembly and a retarder (column 3, lines 30-33). By the very nature of the process, it is not possible to introduce a distance between projections in the width direction.

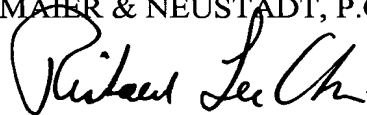
The remaining references of Takeuchi, U.S. 5,958,555, Shizuno et al. U.S. 5,525,397 and Murase et al. U.S. 5,718,972 do not cure the basic deficiencies of the primary reference.

None of the secondary references disclose or suggest a method in which the micro-creped fabric of Schoots could be provided with a distance between projections along the width of the fabric. As such the references do not cure the basic deficiencies of the primary reference and accordingly, any rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should be withdrawn.

Applicants submit this application is now in condition for allowance, and early notification of such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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